DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 895 SO 010 360

TITLE	Major Trends in Educational Development 1974-1976 in the Federal Republic of Germany.
INSTITUTION	Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture of the Laender, Bonn (West Germany).
PUB DATE	25 Apr 77
NOTE	13p.; Not available in hard copy from EDRS due to poor reproducibility of original document; Report presented at International Conference on Education (36th, Geneva, Switzerland, August 30-September 8, 1977)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Comparative Education; Counseling Services; *Educational Development; Educational Finance; *Educational History; *Educational Legislation; Educational Policy; *Educational Practice; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; *Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Reports; Scholarships; Student Teacher Ratio; Teacher Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*West Germany

ABSTRACT

A General Plan for Education in the Federal Republic of Germany was adopted in 1973. Priority areas for development in the plan are vocational education, counseling services, scholarships for secondary and university students, special education programs, and an improvement in the pupil/teacher ratio on the primary level. Developments in the field of education from 1974-76 are reviewed and integrated into a discussion of a phased five-year educational plan for 1973-78. Of paramount importance in this Five Year Plan is an expansion of the financial base to provide equal educational opportunities for an ever-increasing number of secondary and university students. Uniform requirements for the secondary school graduation examination (Arbitur) have been established in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, German, English, French, Latin, Greek, civics, art, music, theology, and physical education. A Higher Education Framework Act was passed in 1976 to govern general reorganization of higher education, curriculum, admission requirements, examinations, and staff categories. The main objective of the act is to coordinate activities of universities, teacher training institutes, a t academies, and specialized institutes. The main developments in educational research during the period under review have been research accompanied school and model experiments in all subjects financed jointly by the Federal and regional governments and research to establish national testing norms. (Author/DB)

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MAJOR TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1974-1976

IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

ED144895

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Report

in preparation for the 36th Session of the International Conference on Education 1977, drawn up on the basis of the Questionnaire of the International Bureau of Education, Geneva

(Document BIE/CONFINTED/ 36/TM/76 of 10 May 1976)

(prepared by the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture of the Laender in the Federal Republic of Germany).

SP 010 360

Bonn, 25 April 1977

Major Trends in Educational Development in the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1974-76

(Report in preparation for the 36th Session of the International Conference on Education 1977, drawn up on the basis of the Questionnaire of the International Bureau of Education, Geneva - BIE/CONFINTED/36/TM/76 of 10 May 1976)

Preliminary note

The following comments are a continuation of the national reports on the most important developments in education in the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany as a contribution to the preparation of the International Conferences on Education. The previous report was completed on 15 January 1975 in reply to the questionnaire of the International Bureau of Education.

1. Survey of new developments

In the period under review, developments in the field of education have on the whole progressed as expected in the light of previous reports.

The Bund-Länder-Commission for Educational Planning and Promotion of Research has given substance to the General Plan for Education adopted in 1973 in the form of medium-term phased plans for the financing of education and for priority areas in vocational education. The General Plan for Education was also supplemented by a plan on training in the different branches of art. A phased plan on further education is in preparation.

The Higher Education Framework Act enacted by the Bundestag with the approval of the Bundesrat became effective in January 1976. It prescribes appropriate legislation by the Länder by 1979.

Further to the reform programme for the upper level of the Gymnasium, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture concluded an agreement on uniform requirements for the Abitur examination. On the basis of that agreement uniformity of examination requirements has been established for the subjects of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, German, English, French, Latin, Greek, civics, the formative arts, music, Protestant and Catholic theology, and sport. The requirements for other subjects are under review.

This last development (enactment of the Higher Education Framework Act and the agreement on uniform requirements for the Abitur) must also be seen as part of the solution to the problem caused by the heavy demand for study places and of the tendency to legislate on all aspects of education in response to the demand for equal opportunities, a question which will be referred to again later.

1.1 Medium-term phased educational plan up to 1978

The medium-term financial plan is based on the General Plan for Education of 1973 and embraces an expansion and a priority programme.

The principal objective of the expansion programme is to ensure the 1973 level in terms of quality and quantity in order to cater for the growing numbers of school leavers and to provide the study places deemed necessary by the University Building Planning Committee. Under this programme consideration will also be given to the discernible effects of policy decisions prior to 1973.

The priority programme is oriented to the following aims, to the extent that the financial and general economic situation allow:

1. Improvement of pupil/teacher ratios in the Grundschule (primary sector) by 20 %, the ratio thus being 26:1.

2. Enlarging special schools by providing more staff and a 20% real increase in equipment.

3. Improvements in vocational education by reducing the teacher shortage at vocational schools; this would improve the pupil/teacher ratio by 13%.

   Providing more classrooms at vocational schools and thus increasing the space/pupil ratio by 25%.

   Extending joint industrial training centres which supplement on-the-job training; the aim is to increase the number of training places by 120%.

4. Providing 35% more study places in the higher education sector and establishing a more balanced staff/student ratio.

5. Ensuring that in spite of the considerable increase in the numbers of pupils and students, the proportion of those receiving financial assistance (at present pupils 33%, students 50%) remains the same.

6. Developing the education counselling scheme and increasing counselling staff by 65%.

7. Securing a 30% real increase in funds for the general promotion of research.

1.2 Phased plan for priorities in vocational education

On the basis of the General Plan for Education and taking into consideration the medium-term phased educational plan up to 1978, this phased plan incorporates measures for the further development of the basic vocational education year, for assistance for joint industrial training establishments, and for the elaboration of education courses leading to professional qualifications in the tertiary sector outside the universities.

Apart from the qualitative development of the basic vocational education year (elaboration of regulations and general curricula), the number of pupils covered by the scheme is to be increased from

15,000 in 1973 to 80,000 in 1978. Vocational school instruction within the dual system is to be widened in the first year of training and more school courses leading to occupational qualifications are to be provided.

As regards joint industrial training establishments, the Federal Government and the Länder are to finance about 27,000 new training places under this scheme. Most of the financial support will go to those training centres in mostly structurally weak areas which have a temporary shortage of entirely suitable on-the-job training possibilities. Under this programme the centres receiving financial assistance will also have to provide occupational training courses for young people with no school leaving certificate or indenture. Moreover, the joint training centres will have to be within reasonable distance of the homes, places of practical training, and schools of those concerned. The possibilities of using mobile joint training centres are to be examined. If necessary, boarding accommodation will be provided.

With regard to courses in the tertiary sector outside the universities leading to occupational qualifications, the phased plan provides for the elaboration of guidelines for such courses and will be a basis for establishing the numbers required and reviewing the types of courses offered.

1.3 The Higher Education Framework Act (Hochschulrahmengesetz)

Following an amendment to the Basic Law (Constitution) which came into effect in May 1969, the Federal Government can now enact outline of skeleton laws on the general principles of higher education. It exercised this competence by passing the Higher Education Framework Act in January 1976. As the name indicates, it provides a general framework which has to be filled out by Land legislation.

In its seven chapters comprising 83 sections, the Higher Education Framework Act covers the functions of the universities and other institutions of higher education, admission requirements, the members, organisation and administration of institutions, government recognition

and the certificates they award, the adaptation of Land legislation, and the necessary amendment of federal laws.

From among the many general provisions, the most important ones are those governing the reorganisation of higher education, the reform of courses of university study, admission to universities, the limitation of periods of study, and the restructuring of teaching bodies.

The purpose of the Act is to reorganise higher education so as to facilitate the integration of or co-operation between the various institutions (universities, teacher training institutions, art academies, Fachhochschulen, etc.), which up to now, as self-governing institutions, have drawn up their own separate syllabuses. Differentiation in higher education is to be based not so much on institutional criteria as in the past but on courses of study.

Pursuant to the Act, the institutions of higher education are required to carry out study reform as a continuous responsibility in collaboration with the competent government authorities. The content and nature of courses have to be constantly reviewed and developed in the light of innovations in the field of science and art, practical requirements, and necessary changes in working life.

With a view to promoting the reform of study courses and examinations and to ensuring co-ordination of and support for reform programmes at individual institutions, the competent regional authorities set up study reform commissions with the assistance of the institutions concerned. They include, apart from representatives of the higher education institutions and government departments, representatives of the professions concerned. These commissions are required to draw up recommendations within prescribed periods on the remodelling and development of study courses.

The provisions of the Act relating to admission to higher education not only lay down general requirements but serve as a basis for the establishment of uniform principles for determining the capacities of institutions, the central allocation of study places, and selection

procedures for numerus clausus subjects. This means that in subjects where the discrepancy between the number of applicants and available places is particularly high, it will in future be possible to initiate a special procedure to determine an applicant's suitability, over and above his school qualifications. Under this special procedure applicants may be required to take tests and practical activities related to the courses of study in question may be assessed and taken into account. This procedure is not designed to test knowledge that has already been the subject of the Abitur examination, which is the qualification for university admission, but rather to give the applicant an opportunity to demonstrate abilities and knowledge not having formed part of any previous examinations but which may be an important indicator for a successful course of study. The Act provides that a number of places may be reserved for applicants who achieve the best results in the aptitude tests, irrespective of the standard achieved in their Abitur examination.

The Act also stipulates that examination regulations as well as the recommendations of the reform commissions should lay down standard periods of study, in other words the period normally required for the attainment of first professional qualifications. These standard periods are important for the drawing up of study regulations, but also for assessing curriculum and teacher requirements, determining training capacities, and ultimately for the elaboration of examination procedures. Only in very special cases should the standard period exceed four years.

As a result of staff restructuring, full-time academic and artistic members of teaching bodies will comprise the following categories: professors, university assistants, academic and artistic staff, as well as lecturers on special assignments. The distinctions between the individual categories depend on qualifications for appointment, scope of responsibilities, and salary scales.

1.4 Uniform requirements for the Abitur examination

The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Culture concluded in February 1975 an agreement on the application of

uniform Abitur standards for the restructured upper forms of the Gymnasium and laid down uniform standards for 15 subjects (German, English, French, Greek, Latin, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics, formative arts, music, Protestant and Catholic theology, sport) that same year, which are to be tested in the comming years.

The description of the knowledge, ability and skills which the pupils are expected to have acquired, as well as the specification of levels of attainment, checks on whether the aim of the course has been achieved, as well as criteria of assessment, the nature and number of questions and activities to be set for examinations, as well as the modalities of the written and oral examinations, are intended to ensure the largest possible degree of uniformity. Since the average mark in the Abitur plays a crucial role where courses of study are governed by the numerus clausus, uniform examination requirements will mean a major improvement.

2. Educational research

The main development in educational research during the period under review has been research-accompanied school and model experiments. Model experiments under the auspices of the Länder are jointly financed and evaluated by the Federal Government and the Länder within the scope of a model programme drawn up by the Bund-Länder-Commission for Educational Planning and Promotion of Research. In addition, the Standing Conference adopted in 1969 programmes for experiments with comprehensive and all-day schools, each experiment going hand in hand with research. Fundamental importance attaches to the results of these scientific studies both with regard to the nature, implementation and optimisation of the experiments themselves and to the appraisal of the objectives in terms of education policy.

Finally, mention is made of test research, which has received fresh impulses in connection with the preparation of tests to supplement admission procedures in numerus clausus subjects.

3. Major educational problems

The various problems ensuing from the heavy demand for study places have already been discussed in previous reports as well as the present one. All that remains to be said, therefore, is that it is hoped that the improved allocation procedure and study reform including the limitation of courses envisaged in Länder legislation and in the Higher Education Framework Act will help remedy the situation and mitigate those problems. As stated in the previous report, the number of secondary level II pupils entitled to a higher education will, according to current forecasts, decline after 1985 so that the problems will diminish accordingly.

The growing number of prospective students and hence the higher number of students in the tertiary sector has produced a graduate population in excess of market demand. This is particularly manifest in the incidence of unemployment among (prospective) teachers. Whereas on the one hand the number of students and graduates continues to increase, the low birth rate groups have now reached the schools; this will mean a decline in the number of applicants for study places in the eighties. Thus we have an excessive number of university graduates wishing to enter the teaching profession and a much smaller number of school children than in previous years.

Various measures are being discussed and in some cases already put into practice with a view to lessoning this discrepancy and resolving the problem. Thus apart form the provision of extra funds, students applying for teaching courses are informed of the situation in this branch, and more teachers who so desire are being given part-time employment (mostly married women and older teachers).

And finally, another problem of educational significance is youth unemployment. The main causes of this, of course, are to be found in the industrial and general economic situation, but it is mostly young people with inadequate school and occupational qualifications who suffer. A wide variety of measures have been introduced to give

these young people better school and occupational qualifications in order to improve especially their competitive position. These measures largely correspond with the longer term aims of the General Plan for Education mentioned in the previous report which have assumed greater urgency in the light of the current problem.

4. Prospects in educational development

The further development of education in the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany has for the most part been outlined above. The problems of admission to higher education, study reform, the excessive number of school leavers qualifying for higher education, as well as youth unemployment, are without doubt the main factors that will affect developments in the years ahead.

Another significant trend is the growing tendency to govern all aspects of school life by law, with the school thus being seen and judged in terms of fundamental rights as guaranteed by the constitution, rights which affect the pupil's relationship with the school and vice-versa. Whereas in the past that relationship was for the most part seen from the point of view of the school's special authority, it being regarded as an area where the law had no direct effect and whose system was based on the school laws and the discretion of the supervising body, there is now a growing demand for a direct statutory mandate for major decisions of the education authority. This tends to restrict freedom of activity where previously the education authority and the school staff could use their discretion, and to give the school a more standardised legal structure. As a result, it has become increasingly possible to challenge school decisions, not only at the administrative level but also in court.

These developments will undoubtedly have considerable influence on school legislation and the actions of education departments in the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Answer to Questionnaire BIE/CONFINTED/36/TM/76
of 1o May 1976

C O R R I G E N D A

- Page 4, item 1.3, 1st para, line 5:

  delete: "in January 1976"

  read: "which came into force in January 1976"

- page 5, line 1:

  delete: "and the certificates they award"

- page 5, 5th para, line 4:

  delete: "with the assistance of"

  read: "in cooperation with"

- page 5, last para, line 1:

  read: "admission to higher education"

- page 6, 1st para, lines 9/10:

  read: "which is the general qualification"

- page 6, 2nd para, line 7:

  delete: "the elaboration of"

- page 7:

  insert new para:

1.5 Control of Correspondence Tuition

To meet complaints about incorrect practice with regard to correspondence teaching the Deutscher Bundestag - in summer 1976 - passed the Law on the Protection of Participants in Correspondence Courses. The law lays down the minimal requirements for contracts - involving fees or charges - between commercial institutes and participants (e.g. withdrawal, cancellation); it further provides - with the exception of hobby courses - for the establishment of a public mechanism to control advertising, use of

agents, standards of correspondence courses before they are admitted for commercial use. This legislation aims amongst other measures at safeguarding the standards of correspondence courses and at enlarging participation."

- page 8:

insert as first para under 3.

"The number of young people completing general education will increase sharply in the coming years. One of the most important problems of education policy is, therefore, how to extend provision for vocational education without impairing the quality of vocational training. This applies to training in part-time schools and enterprises (so-called Dual-System) and to training in vocational full-time schools and institutions of higher learning. Education policy in the Federal Republic of Germany therefore faces quantitative problems not only in higher education, as up to now, but also on all stages throughout vocational qualification."

- page 9, item 4, line 3:

read: "problems of increased birth rates ...."